

*Students from W.T. Sampson Elementary School perform 'La Murga del Carnaval,' a traditional dance of Panama, during the Hispanic Heritage celebration at the Windjammer ballroom on Saturday, Sept. 30. Hispanic Heritage Month is a period to recognize the contributions of Hispanic Americans to the United States.*

Photo by Stacey Byington



## **GTMO celebrates Hispanic heritage**

**By Stacey Byington, Public Affairs Officer**

Hispanic Americans trace their roots to the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the Americas, including the Ara-waks from Puerto Rico, the Aztecs from Mexico, the Incas from South America, the Mayas from Central America, and the Tainos from Cuba.

Saturday evening, Sept. 30, approximately 300 people turned out to celebrate their Hispanic heritage at the Hispanic American Heritage Association Dinner-Dance at the Windjammer. The dinner-dance was held in conjunction with National Hispanic Heritage Month, commemorated annually Sept. 15 - Oct. 15.

Students from W.T. Sampson Elementary School performed traditional Latin American dances from Mexico, Panama and Cuba. The GTMO Salsa Dancers performed the Latin American dances known as the

"Cumbia," "Bachata," "Merengue," "Salsa" and "Reggaeton."

Marine Maj. George Nunez, Commanding Officer of Marine Corps Security Force Company, Guantanamo Bay, was the evening's guest speaker.

"Today, Hispanics are one of America's most dynamic mi-

norities, and an integral part of our daily life. It is the contributions of our Hispanics, and the other cultures that make up the threads of our American fabric, that make us the great nation we are today," said Lupe Beltran, president of the local Hispanic American Heritage Association.

"Like the rest of our nation, our GTMO community is more than just a collection of diverse cultures," she added. "We have strength in this diversity, because as we learn from each other, we create a much stronger world to live in."



**Fair winds and following seas — AGC(AW/SW) Tim Valle retired from the U.S. Navy on Sept. 29, in a small ceremony at the Goat Locker. He enlisted in the Navy on Oct. 27, 1982. He was selected for Chief Petty Officer in September 1999 and during his career, completed two tours as the CPOIC of the Naval Atlantic Meteorology Detachment, Guantanamo Bay.**

Photo by MC1(SW) Terry Matlock